



## Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

### News and Events

- Updated Resources Available: The Environmental Law Institute has just updated its [Database of State Indoor Air Quality Laws](#). In addition to the complete database, you can view sub-databases for laws on mold, radon, Green Cleaning and IAQ in schools. While you are there, also check out the updated [Healthy High Performance School Facilities: Developments in State Policy](#) report.

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### Ahead of the Curve: Incorporating Green Cleaning into Your IAQ Program



Green cleaning acts have been passed in [eight states](#), including New York, Illinois, Maine, Missouri, Connecticut, Maryland, Nevada and Hawaii, and experts expect that at least five more states will pass their own acts in 2010. Being proactive about school environmental issues is one of the most essential elements of successful and sustainable IAQ management programs. So, don't wait until your state has passed a bill to start practicing green cleaning. If you have an IAQ management program in place, you've already laid the groundwork for implementing green cleaning practices, policies and procedures that will contribute to healthier IAQ and a lower environmental impact. By learning from the experiences, following the guidance, and using the resources of states with laws already in place, you can adapt an effective program to fit your own school district's needs without the need to invent a plan from scratch.

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### LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR

[Finding Solutions: The Virtual Walk-Through](#), Thursday, March 25, 2010. Join IAQ experts Richard Prill and David Blake as they share their knowledge in this webinar - available to you free of charge - on how to conduct a facility walk-through to identify solutions to common IAQ problems!

### GREEN CLEANING RESOURCES:

- [Green Cleaning Network](#)
- [Healthy Schools Campaign](#)

Use the [Framework for Effective School IAQ Management](#) to make green cleaning part of your existing IAQ management program and ensure it becomes part and parcel of your continuing effort to create and maintain healthy environments:

### Key Drivers:

- **Organize:** Do your research! Learn about green cleaning products, policies and procedures. Then, think about how they can be integrated into what you are already doing.
- **Communicate:** Tell parents, staff and others why and when you are making the change to other products or practices.
- **Assess:** Determine where and when students and staff could face the most risk from exposure to products that are potentially harmful. Be sure to write down *where*, *when* and *how* exposures could take place.
- **Plan:** Evaluate where product change-outs or additional or revised policies could contribute to a healthier environment for students and staff by minimizing their exposures. Prioritize your actions. Remember: green cleaning doesn't have to happen all at once, and it doesn't have to be all-or-nothing. Just be sure to check first whether your state has any policies in place that might affect your plans.
- **Act:** Once you have a clear plan of action, communicate it to key staff. Training will be essential, as the correct use of green products is essential to your green cleaning initiative's success.
- **Evaluate:** Pay attention to successes and communicate them to everyone in the school community. Was your cleaning time reduced? Are there fewer odor complaints? Are there fewer visits to the nurse and fewer health complaints?

### Technical Guidance:

- **Smart Materials Selection:** Choose the right product for the job. All products have risks and benefits that must be weighed in relation to their impact on student and staff health, IAQ and the environment.
- **Aggressive Source Control:** Fumes from cleaning products can linger long after they've been applied, which can exacerbate asthma symptoms and expose students and staff to potentially harmful substances. Using a green alternative product, changing a policy, or altering a cleaning procedure, can help reduce one more source of indoor air pollution. your buildings are maintained in tip-top shape and conducive to student and staff health and wellness.
- **Effective Cleaning and Maintenance:** Using products and equipment correctly is just as important as using the right products and equipment for the job! It might mean a bigger investment in training up front, but it will all be worth it when your buildings are maintained in tip-top shape and conducive to student and staff health and wellness.

- [National Collaborative Work Group on Green Cleaning and Chemical Policy Reform in Schools](#)
- [New York State Office of General Services Green Cleaning](#)

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### DID YOU MISS THE SYMPOSIUM?

No problem! Presentations from the expert speakers at the 10th *IAQ Tools for Schools* National Symposium are available to [download](#) on the Symposium Web site.

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### JOIN THE DISCUSSION

The Schools IAQ Connector Listserv makes it easy to **connect directly** with your peers to share information and communicate over e-mail and on the Web. **Join the listserv today** by sending a blank e-mail message to [schools\\_iaq\\_connector-subscribe@lists.epa.gov](mailto:schools_iaq_connector-subscribe@lists.epa.gov). Then, check your e-mail inbox for your confirmation and membership details.

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### BECOME AN IAQ TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS AWARD WINNER

The [National Great Start](#) and [National Leadership](#) Awards are merit-based awards for schools or school districts that are in the beginning phases of their IAQ management programs. **Applications are accepted year-round. [Apply today!](#)**

Incorporating green cleaning into your existing IAQ management program can put you ahead of the curve and further demonstrate your commitment to student and staff health and environmental stewardship. With the infrastructure necessary to organize and implement effective environmental health initiatives already in place, you can practice green cleaning in no time.

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### In Focus: What Does It Mean to be Green?

Green cleaning goes beyond just chemicals. Green cleaning is about the policies, procedures and know-how to protect health and the environment. That is not the only misconception when it comes to green cleaning – consider these common myths about going green at school:

**Myth 1: All cleaning products labeled as “green” are healthy and safe.**

Every product, green or not, has risks and benefits for IAQ, health and the environment that must be weighed. The best way to determine what green products can or can't do for your school is through education. Do your research to [become knowledgeable](#) about green products and your school's health, safety and IAQ will come out on top!

**Myth 2: If I use green cleaning products, I have a green cleaning program.**

That's part of it, but you won't have a holistic program until you move beyond the “cleaners and equipment” mindset. Like a well-established IAQ management program, green cleaning involves multiple layers of planning, strategy, implementation and communication. If you think of it as part of your existing sustainable IAQ management efforts, you'll be able to take a comprehensive approach with lasting effects. Learn how *IAQ Tools for Schools* National Excellence Award winner North East Independent School District [incorporated green cleaning](#) into its IAQ management program.

**Myth 3: Green cleaning is too costly when compared to conventional cleaners.**

The cost of green cleaners and equipment varies from school to school, depending on a district's size and cleaning needs. However, there is consensus that green cleaning methods actually save money, if not up front – as is often the case – then in the long run. Plus, consider all the non-monetary benefits: better indoor air quality and fewer occupant complaints.

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### Insight into Excellence: Westport Public Schools and Green Cleaning



[Westport Public Schools](#) launched their IAQ management program in 2007, and right from the start, incorporated green cleaning by way of their Green Clean for Health Program. They started by establishing clear roles to organize their effort. The Director of Facilities directed and coordinated all the district's environmental initiatives. The Supervisor of Building Operations focused on their implementation and helped codify green cleaning policies and procedures. The Assistant Superintendent for Business monitored IAQ conditions overall and helped to streamline their efforts. They communicated the new standard procedures and policies to custodians, teachers and other staff. Each group learned what

was and wasn't allowed, who was responsible for cleaning what, and who to talk to if they had a question or a concern. Now, they continue to communicate, train and reinforce these lessons so it becomes part of the

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culture – a sustainable element of their comprehensive IAQ management program.

Westport's excellent start to green cleaning was boosted in the summer of 2009 when Connecticut passed legislation mandating that schools have green cleaning programs in place by 2011. Westport embraced the legislation as an opportunity to build on their efforts. They took advantage of green cleaning being in the spotlight to connect green cleaning and IAQ as a whole to generate buy-in from parents and the Board of Education for a ramped-up IAQ program. And, it paid off – over time, they were able to upgrade equipment and materials and train more staff.

As Westport has proven, you do not need legislation to practice green cleaning. If you incorporate it into what you are already doing successfully as part of your IAQ management program, you can not lose.

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## Inspiring Action: IAQ Design Challenge School District Update

Since participating in the [IAQ Tools for Schools National Symposium](#) in January 2010, the School District of Philadelphia has formed an *IAQ Tools for Schools* Committee, an important step to continuing the momentum they gained at the Symposium. The Committee includes school district administration officials, facilities and operations management specialists, EPA regional staff, environmental health science professionals, union representatives, nurses, teacher representatives, a representative from the American Lung Association and an *IAQ Tools for Schools* Faculty from Baltimore County Public Schools. Working together, they have already developed a Framework for IAQ Action including a draft IAQ management plan, an action plan, and are currently creating a pilot project. Stay tuned for more updates from all five of our [IAQ Design Challenge School Districts](#) as they work to develop effective, sustainable IAQ management programs in their Districts!

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## Have Your Questions Answered!

Is there a topic you want to see covered in an *IAQ Tools for Schools* Update? Need more information or have a quick question? Do you have suggestions for a webinar, an Update feature, or are you simply curious about an IAQ topic and would like more information? If so, send us an e-mail at [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

**Share YOUR news and events!** Send us information to share with the school IAQ community. It could be featured in the next Update. E-mail your news to [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

If you like what you're reading, maybe a friend or colleague would too - forward this e-mail! To subscribe to *IAQ Tools for Schools* Updates, send an e-mail to [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com) with "subscribe" in the subject line.

The *IAQ Tools for Schools* Program is a comprehensive resource to help schools maintain a healthy environment in school buildings by identifying, correcting, and preventing IAQ problems. Learn more about the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Program at [www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools).

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